

## By MICHAEL KNOX Wycombe 1, Barking 4

**BARKING** gave a brilliant demonstration of the great striking power that has taken them to their first Berger Isthmian League championship when they sent Wycombe Wanderers crashing to their biggest home defeat for years on Monday night.

The lethal finishing of Peter Burton and Mick Dingwall, both of whom scored two clinical goals illustrated how Barking have

scored 91 times in the league this season.

Wycombe, despite fielding another weakened side, did not play too badly but their mistakes at the back were punished heavily as they slumped to their first home league defeat for six months stretching back ten games.

The loss could have been even worse but for a brilliant penalty save by John Maskell in the second half — his second one on the trot. But even his acrobatics could not stop the Barking goal machine from clicking into action.

There was a sporting gesture at the start of the match when Wycombe players lined up to welcome the new champions on to the field. To a certain extent this generosity extended to the game itself as Blues defence made a number of blunders while under pressure.

These were partly explained by an injured Alan Phillips having to play out of position because of Blues shortage of available players — a list added to by Howard Kennedy's involvement at a school function.

With Bobby Davies fit again, Paul Birdseye was pushed into mid-field and Phillips played at

right-back and was visibly protecting his shoulder injury throughout the match.

### Worse fears

So the omens were not too bright before the match and the worse fears were realised after just three minutes when Barking took the lead.

The lively Gary Anderson, my man of the match, was allowed to move unchallenged deep into Wycombe territory before crossing into the penalty area. Burton headed the ball down to Dingwall whose shot on the turn was placed perfectly just inside the left upright.

It was a goal of cool efficiency made easier by Barking's support for the man in possession. The moment they moved into attack, Barking pushed many players forward.

Blues on the other hand had to rely on individual efforts like the two long range effort from Birdseye which went close.

Burton always had the beating of Keith Mead in the air and he headed Barking further in front with a well-placed shot following good work by Ashford and Dingwall on the left in the 28th minute.

With Mick Holfield maintaining the improved form he has shown during the past month, Wycombe were not without hope of pulling a goal back as Barking do tend to give their opponents a chance.

Sure enough, right on half time Wycombe made it 2-1. Birdseye's long throw from the right was headed on at the near post by a defender and Atkins applied the finishing touch.

However all hopes of a revival were shattered in the third minute of the second half, when a bad defensive header by Phillips let Burton in for a half-chance. He snatched it brilliantly with a powerful drive past Maskell from the narrowest of angles.

Five minutes later it looked as though worse was to come when Barking were awarded a penalty. Chris Ballard appeared to dive as Mead made a successful challenge for the ball but Mr Maber thought otherwise.

However Maskell took justice into his own hands by diving a long way to his left to make a spectacular save from Twidell's penalty attempt. Not bad for a man on the eve of his 36th birthday.

Wycombe came back well and pressurised Barking for a period, but the nearest they went to score came when Atkins headed narrowly wide from Birdseye's fine cross.

But Barking had the final word, following an ambitious back pass from the touch-line near half-way by Steve Hardwick. Dingwall spotted it coming and raced on to the ball before slotting past the advancing Maskell.

It was a gift goal from a Wycombe side, who are now certain to finish in their lowest league position for 11 seasons.

**WYCOMBE:** J. Maskell, A. Phillips, R. Davies, K. Mead, S. Hardwick, P. Birdseye, S. Atkins, M. Holfield, L. Reed, D. Evans, T. Scott. Sub S. Long (not used).

**BARKING:** N. Hardwick, G. Twidell, R. Makin, K. Barrett, D. Wajite, N. Ashford, C. Ballard (sub N. Ireston 76 mins), G. Anderson, P. Burton, M. Dingwall, A. Brothers.

**Referee:** T. Maber (Ruislip).

**Half-time:** 1-2. Scorers: Wycombe — Atkins (45 mins); Barking — Dingwall (3, 82), Burton (28, 48).

